



ASLEF

PUBLISHED BY THE ASSOCIATED SOCIETY OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS AND FIREMEN

JOURNAL
DECEMBER 2010



TRANSPORT CUTS WOULD HARM US ALL

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Signals are key to overcrowding

A report from the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) this month concluded that there is 'little evidence of an increasing health and safety problem' as a result of overcrowding in trains. It read more like a TOC hand-out than RSSB research.

For one thing their first recommendation proposes defining what 'crowding on trains' actually means. It's quite remarkable to declare something safe before you know what it is! It also points out that there are problems like passengers not being able to see warning signs, or hear audible warnings – but as these are 'general' crowding problems, and not train-specific, they have decided to ignore them!

I was also drawn to their identifying 'underutilisation of the space available on trains' as an issue. This means the first class is empty and the second is full. Frankly it doesn't take a genius to solve this one!

I could put more arguments showing that overcrowding is patently unsafe, but I want to talk about solving problems, not tinkering with the issues as the RSSB recommendations propose.

The solution is very simple. Rail is getting more popular every year, so we need more trains. The only way we can run more trains is by radical improvement to signalling.

Modern signalling means more trains can run safely along a piece of track. Yet not only does the UK not have modern signalling – we won't be getting it for the foreseeable future. The days of the line side signal should be over – but each year the introduction of the up-to-date European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) slips further into the future.

Years ago we were told it would be introduced in ten years. Then it became 15 years. Now estimates for its introduction into the UK is set at 30 years – and even then it will not cover the entire network. By that time passengers will be lucky to get a place on the roof.

Keith Norman
General Secretary



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ABOUT **ASLEF**

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**More than
just a union**

Keith Norman pays ASLEF's tribute to war dead

ON 11 November general secretary Keith Norman laid a wreath at Marylebone station in London in a ceremony recalling the sacrifices made by railway workers in times of war. This was the date in 1918 when an armistice was signed ceasing hostilities on the western front.

The event was organised by Chiltern Railways and GB Railfreight in front of GBRf 66715 which was named Valour on 11 November 2003 in succession to the six class 9P 'Lord Farringdon' express passenger locomotive. The original 'Valour' was used in remembrance services from 1920 until 1939 but was withdrawn from service in 1947.

The full title of the locomotive is 'Valour in memory of all railway employees who gave their lives for their country'.



Keith Norman with the wreath ASLEF laid to commemorate our war heroes



The nameplate 'Valour' on GBRf 66715

Massive backing for Arriva Trains Wales strike

ASLEF's 478 members in Arriva Trains Wales are taking strike action on 19 November, 26 November and 27 November – with other dates in the pipeline but not yet announced.

In a ballot, members were asked two questions. To the first, 'Are you prepared to take part in a strike?' 92% said yes – and to the second, 'Are you prepared to take part in industrial action short of a strike?' 95.9% said yes. The turn-out for the vote was remarkably high – over 80%.

General Secretary Keith Norman said he had written to the company's HR Director to inform him that their failure to provide a satisfactory pay offer is not acceptable to ASLEF and advising him of the dates of the initial industrial action.

'This is a clear-cut dispute about the company's pay offer. Our members in ATW have seen their salaries fall behind train drivers in the rest of the industry. They will not be penalised for working in Wales.'

Keith confirmed that a further meeting had been arranged between the union and the company but warned that the ballot result showed clearly the anger of ASLEF members.

'We will not accept that train drivers in Wales are second class citizens,' he insists.



Nottingham English and Maths learners received ASLEF Education badges at a recent branch meeting. Congratulations to (L-R) Peter Coles, Andy Jones, Dave Vernon and local union learning rep Andy Wakefield.

Christmas cards are off!

The Executive Committee has agreed that instead of sending ASLEF Christmas cards this year, the union will make a donation of £2,000 to the Chelsea Pensioners' appeal. 'I feel this is a more appropriate and worthwhile way for the union to recognise the festive season,' said Keith Norman as he put the proposal to the committee. (See also letters page).

DAVE'S BACK AS RAIL PENSION TRUSTEE

Dave Tyson, a former union President, has been re-elected as a Trustee Director of the Railways Pension Scheme. 'I'd like to thank everyone who supported me,' Dave says. 'I was proud to see that both ASLEF and the RMT showed joint support for me and Mick Cash in this election and that all three incumbents were elected, including Gary Towse of the BTP.'

Dave says he is always pleased at the strong working relationship shared by the Member Nominated Trustees. 'I'm sure the coming six years of office will be a challenge, but I look forward to representing all members in the Scheme,' says Dave who is a driver based in Norwich.

TRAIN OVERCROWDING – A CONSULTANT SPEAKS

Overcrowding on trains in England and Wales will get substantially worse over the next four years despite rises in ticket prices, according to a report by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (PAC). It was certain that the Department for Transport's own targets for increasing passenger places would be missed – and said the failure was due to the absence of any requirement to improve capacity within train operators' contracts.

Chairwoman of the PAC Margaret Hodge said MPs were concerned that the 'already unacceptable levels of overcrowding will simply get worse and ever more intolerable'.

Fortunately last month a consultant came to the rescue. Productivity consultant Eugene Chinal advised stopping pushing and 'creating - and maintaining - a steady flow'. Mainly, he advises against 'crowding around doors when getting on and off'.

He omits to mention how, if the train is overcrowded, people can possibly prevent crowding around the doors – but that's consultancy in a nut-shell!

SENIORITY AT KINGS CROSS

Jim Bull is putting together an 'All Time Kings Cross Seniority List' and is looking for information on all Kings Cross drivers, firemen and secondmen, both past and present – 'Names, seniority dates, nicknames – anything, no matter how small or incomplete,' he says. So far he's collected over 1,650 names that are updated and posted at the Kings Cross FCC messroom. If you can help with the project, contact Jim on his mobile (07999307292) or his email (bulliesbashers1959@live.co.uk). And he says he'll email you the list so far if you get in touch.

TUC rallies against the cuts



ASLEF members meet up at Westminster to join the rally and lobby MPs about the negative effects of public service cuts

ON 19 October, the day before Chancellor George Osborne revealed the full extent of the public sector cuts in his Comprehensive Spending Review, the TUC held a rally in Westminster and a lobby of Members of Parliament to try to persuade the government to think again about its proposals.

ASLEF supported the event in its customary manner and the General Secretary joined a photo opportunity drawing attention to the fact that despite being

rescued by taxpayers during the crash, UK banks will avoid paying £19 billion of tax on future profits. This is equivalent to more than £1,100 for every family in the UK.

Details were revealed in a TUC report called 'The Corporate Tax Gap' which says that as well as benefitting from an £850 billion bailout from taxpayers and the Bank of England during the recession, banks are able to offset their £19 billion of tax losses between 2007 and 2009 against paying tax on future profits.



Keith Norman joins other general secretaries to highlight the amount of tax being avoided this year by UK banks

Companynews

COMPANY COUNCIL ELECTIONS

The following members have been elected to Company Councils:

FREIGHTLINER HEAVY HAUL BUSINESS COUNCIL

East, Scotland and Borders Constituency (Casual Vacancy) - Bro R Carline, Worksop Branch

FREIGHTLINER HEAVY HAUL LOCAL LEVEL COUNCIL

Scotland and Borders Constituency - Bro L Harrison, Motherwell Branch

Western Constituency - Bro M Mooney, Crewe Branch

Kiveton Park and Humber Constituency - Bro A Wetherill, Worksop Branch

DB SCHENKER TRAINCREW COMPANY COUNCIL

Yorks & Humberside Constituency - Bro N Roebuck, Sheffield No.1 Branch

West Midlands Constituency - Bro R Hickman, Bescot Branch

Wessex Constituency - Bro B Kennedy, Bristol Branch

HULL TRAINS COMPANY COUNCIL

Bro M Ward - Hull Branch

REST DAY WORKING

ASLEF is prepared to sanction Rest Day Working on

- London Midland until 25 December 2010
- First Capital Connect until 26 February 2011
- First Transpennine Express until 28 May 2011

PAY SETTLEMENTS

GRAND CENTRAL

The EC has accepted an offer of 4.5% from April 2010.

DRS

Members in DRS voted by 72% in favour of the 2010 pay offer consisting of an effective increase in pensionable pay of 5%.

Lorry charging 'commitment'

THE coalition government appears now to be committed to establishing a lorry road user charging system – which has to be good news for road users, environmentalists and the UK rail freight industry. It was included in the government's 'Infrastructure UK' plan which the Prime Minister launched at a CBI conference last month. ASLEF supports the principle of a lorry road user charging system.

Scots say there's a better way

TWENTY thousand trade unionists marched through the streets of Scotland's capital to protest at the Con Dems cuts last month under the slogan, 'There is a better way' reports District Organiser Kevin Lindsay.

ASLEF members were out in force with members from Inverness, Motherwell, Yoker, Glasgow, Polmadie, Edinburgh No1, Edinburgh No.2, Perth and the Retired Members' Section.

We were joined by Ian Gray MSP, Leader of the Scottish Labour Party and Karen Whitefield MSP. The rally was addressed by Graham Smith, General Secretary of the STUC. He had a simple message for Nick Clegg – 'If you walk like a Tory, talk like a Tory and cut like a Tory – then you're a Tory!'

The STUC will continue to campaign against these cuts and will fight the ideological attacks on public services – and ASLEF in Scotland will be at the heart of these fights because there is a better way!



▲ **ASLEF in the centre of the protests in the Scottish capital. Photo: Derrick Lowrie**

◀ **ASLEF supporters large and small get ready to register their protest at the spending cuts. Photo: Derrick Lowrie**

The name's Young - but the ideas are archaic!



says Victoria Phillips, head of employment law at Thompsons Solicitors ...

LORD YOUNG published his report into health and safety and 'compensation culture' – 'Common Sense, Common Safety' – on 15 October.

It offers no new evidence or research and appears to be based entirely on opinion which at times is both confused and contradictory.

Lord Young's terms of reference were, 'To investigate and report back to the Prime Minister on the rise of the compensation culture over the last decade coupled with the current low standing that health and safety legislation now enjoys and to suggest solutions.'

Although Young refers to 'compensation culture' as if it were a fact, he concedes that it is 'perception rather than reality' and that it is this perception that leads employers to be overcautious when attempting to interpret health and safety in the workplace:

'We have all read countless media stories blaming health and safety regulations for all manner of restrictions on our everyday life...there is no end to the constant stream of misinformation in the media. Again and again 'health and safety' is blamed for a variety of decisions, few of which actually have any basis in health and safety legislation at all.'

Yet, even though Young identifies the insurance industry as having encouraged the myth of the compensation culture and caused organisations to be overly risk averse, they are the main beneficiaries of his proposed reforms

HITTING OUT AT VICTIMS

Instead of confining his recommendations to ones that would dispel the compensation culture myth (which would be welcome) he hits injury victims, by recommendations which will undermine health and safety - and further load personal injury procedures in favour of insurance companies.

Young rails against the European Union for overburdening employers with health and safety red tape but the day to day reality of what health and safety regulations actually do means that his much trumpeted plans to tear them up have largely been thwarted.

He suggests simplified risk assessments for 'low risk' workplaces such as shops, classrooms

and offices - a move which will condemn a significant sector of the working population to a second rate health and safety regime. And while he has accepted that individuals cannot be liable for the consequences of a voluntary act unless negligence can be proved (he acknowledges that it is a media myth that they are) he suggests legislating to achieve 'clarity' on the issue.

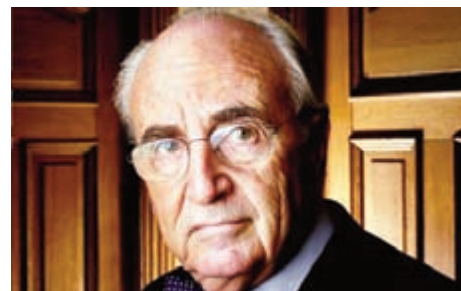
MYTHS SHOULD BE DEBUNKED

A public information campaign aimed at debunking the myths about people's rights to sue others makes sense, but legislating against a perception is impossible and pointless.

He also wants to amend the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) by extending to seven days the period before an injury or accident needs to be reported. There will be a consultation on this next year. Accidents are already under-reported, especially in non-unionised workplaces, and this can only get worse with such flexibility.

For reasons that appear to be ideological rather than anything to do with the terms of reference, Young seeks to meddle in the way personal injury cases are run by recommending that employers' liability (EL) claims should be brought into the new personal injury claims process which started in April to speed up the settlement of road traffic accident (RTA) claims worth less than £10,000.

Apart from the fact that it is too early to say that the new process is working effectively and should be extended, it would mean that people injured at work will have their



Lord Young reports on Health & Safety

compensation claim treated in the same way as if it were a simple rear end shunt.

PRESSURE ON WORKERS

The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) started a review of the personal injury claims process in 2007 and the idea of including workplace injury claims in the new RTA process was considered and rejected. Trade unions, consumer groups and claimant lawyers opposed lumping RTA and EL cases together because workplace accident claims are more complex than RTA cases and the relationship between employers and employees is very different to that between two drivers.

An extension would give employers the opportunity to put pressure on workers and their colleagues, who may be witnesses, before their lawyers can record the evidence accurately.

Young also recommends introducing the recommendations made by Lord Justice Jackson in his review of civil costs. This will hit injury victims, undermine union legal services and limit the ability of charities to represent injury victims.

A consultation on Jackson is due soon. That will be an opportunity to question why – other than for ideological reasons – the government appears to want to press ahead with reforms that will save no money and disenfranchise injured people.





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London Underground – not Boxing clever

THE union is to ballot members for industrial action after London Underground insisted that Boxing Day is a 'normal working day'.

'London Underground are refusing to concede that our members should receive additional payments for working on Boxing Day,' reports Terry Wilkinson, the EC member for District 8. 'To claim that Boxing Day is 'an ordinary working day' is an almost unbelievable denial of an obvious fact.

'They are living on another planet if they think ASLEF members will accept this piece of fiction.'

The union has argued the case for additional payments for working on 26 December at both Trains Council and Directors Level but without success. The union's Annual Assembly of Delegates (AAD) fully supported the case when it debated it earlier in the year – and it is not something ASLEF will concede.

When District Organiser Steve Grant gave a report to last month's EC meeting, they

immediately resolved to ballot train grade members on London Underground for industrial action on 26 December unless suitable compensation is agreed.

'As well as insulting our intelligence by the bizarre claim that Boxing Day is nothing special, London Underground has unilaterally torn up existing agreements,' Terry says. These include accords on the District Line and Metropolitan Lines where depots had previously taken it in rotation to cover the service, and an agreement on the Hammersmith and City line where a very limited service ran on a Boxing Day which compensated staff who all work on August Bank Holiday to cover the Notting Hill carnival. Management are saying these no longer exist!

Management are insisting that the only train staff who will not be required to work on Boxing Day this year are those on rest day or who have booked Annual leave.

'This is not something we can accept,' Terry insists. 'It's not just Boxing Day – it also has repercussions for all Bank



Holidays. It used to be almost guaranteed that if you worked one Bank Holiday, you would not work the next. But the increase in service levels has meant this is now no longer possible. It needs addressing – but not like this!

'We are not opposed to additional services for customers. Why should we be? They help to make our employment more secure. But, like the AAD, we believe that there are times when staff need to be appropriately compensated for working at

highly unsocial times – and that includes Boxing Day.'

The union points out that despite the company claiming it's just a normal day, they are accepting advertising by large London stores who are having Boxing Day sales. 'So the customers we'd be carrying will (unlike us!) be getting rewarded with big discounts on the goods they bring back,' Terry says.

'If they get away with this, next year they'll be telling us Christmas Day is a normal day as well!'

Sign language event at Ashford

THE union's learning arm, ASLEF Education, organised a Sign Language event at Ashford Traincrew Depot on 6 October. Eleven people took part in the all-day event which was tailor-made for people working in the rail industry.

The instructor was a Rail Union Learning rep from the

Conductor Grade who learnt to sign after his daughter was born deaf. We were shown the 'BSL Fingerspelling Alphabet' and how to sign station names and also many basic phrases to assist with work.

The day was both informative and enjoyable, and in the process we raised over £30 for the Kent Child



Deaf Society. Hopefully we will be able to take this Signing Taster Event to other depots in the

future.

(Report from Richard Daniels, lead learning rep at Ashford)



FLEXIBLE FARES FOR TOCs

The Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has said that train companies will be forced to use their new pricing power responsibly, because if they don't the companies risk pricing passengers off the railway.

These comments follow the government's announcement that train companies will be given a 5% flexibility around regulated fares from January 2011. The average increase remains RPI (the Retail Price Index) plus 1% and in theory any fare increased by more than this must be balanced by another fare reducing by the same amount.

Passenger groups insist that in the past, train companies have used this type of 'fares basket' flexibility to impose increases of more than 10% on some routes.

TUC ON THE MARCH IN MARCH!

General Secretary Brendan Barber has revealed that the TUC's National Demonstration against the cuts will be held on 26 March. Brendan was speaking at the Greater London Association of Trade Union Councils (GLATUC) 150th Anniversary Meeting

EXCHANGE WITH BORIS

ASLEF representatives met London mayor Boris Johnson recently along with affiliates from South East Region of the TUC (SERTUC) reports James McGowan. A range of issues were discussed, including the impact of the comprehensive spending review on London, the development of Crossrail and the future of London Underground.

Only by constructing alliances can we resist public service cuts



says **Gregor Gall**, Professor of Industrial Relations at University of Hertfordshire

SINCE this year's TUC Congress there has been a growing appreciation that to effectively fight the forthcoming cuts and privatisation in public services, two things must happen. The first is that unions must work together - because no individual union can effectively resist the cuts and privatisation alone.

Even together unions may not be strong enough to resist the tide - so the second need is to construct new civil alliances of the providers and users of public services.

These points are obvious in the case of ASLEF. Yes, ASLEF is a small and powerful union but it is only one of four - TSSA, Unite and the RMT - in the rail industry. Each of them supports further investment in the industry and bringing it back into public ownership.

Even if ASLEF was the only union in the industry, it would still have a vested interest in working with other unions, apart from the principal of solidarity. ASLEF members and their families use, and are reliant upon, the public services that other union members provide.

On one hand, members of other unions need ASLEF members' support to protect their own jobs and the services they provide for others. On the other, ASLEF members need the support of other unions in its battle to protect the rail industry and return it to public ownership.

Your union should continue to

find a receptive audience here because other unions' members use and are reliant upon the services ASLEF members provide.

NEED FOR A WIDER VIEW

None of this is rocket science but every ASLEF member (as with each member of the other unions) is going to have to be a lot more active - both inside and outside their workplaces - if the cuts and privatisation are to be stopped.

Most obviously this means joining the TUC demonstration in March next year and making sure this protest is similar in size to those seen recently in many continental European countries. Yet this kind of activity, though important, will also need to be the supplement to much local activity.

It is here that the new civil alliances between union members - as providers of services - and the users of these services can most easily be imagined and understood.

There are two key reasons for forming such alliances.

One is that critics like the government and media will find it easy to portray union action as nothing more than protecting sectional vested interests. By creating these alliances of providers and users, this can be rebutted - because 'vested interest' is situated within unselfish altruism, and in pursuit of the common good.

The second reason is that linking the providers and users of



the public services helps establish the intimate and tangible link between the jobs and their terms and conditions of the job holders, and the quality of the services these workers provide.

ALLIANCES GROW FROM THE ROOTS

These alliances cannot be only at head office level. They must be local participatory ones as well. Campaigns at the local level need to be highly visible as well as popularly participated in.

Yet creating these alliances and making them effective will not be easy. The nature of the impact of cuts and privatisation means that not every citizen is affected in the same way and at the same time. For example, cuts and privatisation in the NHS most immediately affect the patient, their families and friends - but we do not all use the NHS at the same time and in the same way.

The cuts in one service will not fall at the same time throughout the country either - and if they are imposed it can leave us feeling powerless and disenfranchised. In other words, there is a differential effect that does not necessarily lead to the possibility of citizens being able to empower themselves.

Added to this, most service users are not organised as collectives so the unions do not have the luxury of having ready made alliance partners. So while it is easy for unions to make links with charities and pressure groups that work on behalf of a range of users, these organisations are not organisations of the users themselves. Consequently, these organisations do not have the capacity to act as mass organisations capable of mobilising their memberships. The one exception is the National Pensioners' Convention.

Yet none of this can get away from the fact that these alliances are needed and that unions need to make the running to help create them, even if that also means helping set up a genuine collective body to represent the interests of the travelling public.

And time is of the essence ...





Testing times for training



reports **National
Organiser Simon
Weller**

HAVE we just seen the shape of things to come? I recently attended a meeting with a nice, affable chap to discuss training for drivers – nothing remarkable or unusual about that.

Except in this instance he was proposing something that would change the whole relationship of train driver and employer. A fundamental change to recruitment and training that would not be good for either existing or future drivers (no great surprise there).

His company "in2rail" proposed shifting the cost of selection and basic training away from the recruiter (the railway undertaking) to the prospective employee (the driver).

In a similar way to how a large number of HGV drivers obtain their licences; by the individual taking lessons and tests in their own time and at their own expense.

In2rail's proposals not only affected basic training but also extended to the selection process, passing that cost onto the potential candidate. As you may know, the psychometric test is a compulsory factor of selection and costs the railway undertaking approximately £150 per candidate. If in2rail pre-selected individuals, at the individual's own cost of course, it would provide a significant and attractive benefit to the companies. Particularly in these straightened times and there would be no shortage of people prepared to pay.

The training program outlined to us was a

cross between class room, correspondence course and home based computer simulation all done in the trainee's own time and expense – no doubt all appropriately risk assessed and with the necessary safety cases.

However, even he said the training was never there to provide a fully rounded and finished driver but to provide a part trained candidate who would be psychometrically and medically tested, passed in rules and simulated degraded situations. The railway undertaking could then provide handling, routes and traction as a top-up at greatly reduced cost and risk to them.

This is not a new methodology; we have seen it for years as supermarkets have passed their costs down onto farmers and suppliers – this is just an extension of that practice. The costs in this case being passed onto the prospective driver.

The morality of denying less well off people the opportunity to enjoy our job, salary and conditions is obviously wrong. How many of us could have afforded tuition fees, time from our existing jobs or the selection and medical costs when we started on the railway?

The whole proposal raises more ominous questions of casualisation and deskilling. Ominous because part of our strength is our skill and the cost it takes to replace us.

If training standards are eroded, giving rise to these correspondence courses in train driving we will take a giant step backwards in the professionalism of our trade.

Players in the industry told in2rail if they had the backing of ASLEF then they would look at their proposals – ASLEF can quite categorically tell the industry we have no intention of supporting a dilution and outsourcing of train driver training in this way.

SQUASH UPDATE



GBRF

The company have advised us that they have agreed to lease a further five Class 66 locos and as part of the deal ten of their locos

(including the new ones) are to be fitted with air conditioning and sound attenuation equipment. This work is booked to be completed by 11 April when there should be a total of 12 locos fitted with Air Con and 15 with noise attenuation from a fleet of 37. They are working towards fitting the remainder of the fleet by summer 2012. The success of the noise attenuation equipment will be a major step forward.

FREIGHTLINER GROUP

We were recently advised that agreement has been reached with the ROSCOs regarding a finance package to pay for the fitting of air conditioning equipment to the Freightliner fleet. Only one ROSCO has still to sign up but that will happen soon. It is planned to have nine locos fitted by the end of the year, with further locos fitted as they go in for major exams. However, due to the size of the fleet it will be some time before all locos are fitted.

The issue of new drivers' seats is still ongoing because the ones trialled so far have not been fit for purpose. A new trial seat has been sourced and will soon be fitted for drivers comments.

Andy Morrison comments, 'While I'm frustrated at the length of time taken to progress these matters at least now it seems the air-con system has proved to work and locos are now being fitted.'

'We will continue to press for Freightliner to fit the noise attenuation equipment into their locos now that GBRF seems to have proved it works.'

HULL TRAINS

The current refresh of C180s includes

- re-upholstering drivers' seats with additional padding and support to the base and backrest
- stand-alone fan fitted to centre cab for additional cooling
- independent floor level heater behind driver's seat; and
- HVAC upgrades including easier access to reset panel

**Don't let it cost
you your job!**



The Shrewsbury 24 – why they still matter

by **Alan Griffiths**, Chair of ASLEF's Shrewsbury branch and Secretary of the London Midland Company Council

WHY should we still protest about the treatment of the Shrewsbury 24? Isn't it history now, something we can safely put aside? After all, a couple of them were arrested in 1972 and they were released a few years later. Couldn't we just forget it?

Not in my book. For a start the Shrewsbury 24 were – and are – victims of a gross miscarriage of justice. They were tried on trumped-up charges relating to alleged events during the 1972 National Building Workers Strike. Two of their leaders, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson, (*pictured above right*) were sent to prison under the 1875 (yes, 1875!) Conspiracy Act, a piece of legislation that had never been used before the dispute, and has never been used since.

The Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign calls for a public enquiry to be set up and for these perverse convictions to be quashed and for the pickets to be fully exonerated. That's why earlier this year ASLEF members – including District 6 Organiser Mick Whelan, EC President Alan Donnelly and EC member Brian Corbett – joined thousands of other trade unionists in Shrewsbury to march, rally and demonstrate in support of the pickets.

THERE IS A CONSPIRACY

At the rally, Shrewsbury 24 picket and campaigner Mike Abbott spoke about the documents relating to the case. He couldn't show them to us – because they are still withheld by the government in the interest of 'national security'. 'What this demonstrates to me,' he said, 'it that there is indeed a conspiracy – a conspiracy by the government against the pickets.'

It was a theme taken up by other speakers: that trade unionists have a duty to make the public aware of this state conspiracy and betrayal of the pickets. And this is not just a matter of 'doing the right thing'. We have a vested interest. If attacks like this on trade unionists are tolerated or ignored, we could be the next to taste such 'justice'. There is a wall of silence by the establishment. After a rally in 2009 Ricky Tomlinson challenged the local chief constable, who had made unfavourable



comments in the press, to debate the issue in public in the town. 'Anywhere, anytime, anyplace,' was Ricky's offer.

None of these alternatives seem to have been convenient. The silence from the police chief has been deafening.

IMPORTANT TODAY

This campaign is even more important now given the recent change in government. It is not just about a miscarriage of justice from 40 years ago, it is also about the continuing struggle to prevent it from happening again. It is about protecting trade union rights and the rights of ordinary working people.

I'd really recommend the excellent book 'The Key to my Cell' by the late Shrewsbury picket Des Warren. It's an essential read and so compelling that most people consume it all in a couple of days. The book is produced on a not-for-profit basis and has been re-published by the Justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign. Details about how to get it, or how to contact the campaign are below.

PUT IT IN YOUR DIARY!

Why not use your new ASLEF diary to put in the date of 2 July 2011 now? That's when the next year's Shrewsbury 24 march and rally will take place. I urge all trade unionists, branches and union councils to try to attend and find some way to support the rally.

This campaign is about stopping governments from creating and using unjust laws and conspiring to crush and imprison people for merely defending basic human rights. Trade unionists must not underestimate the importance of the events of 1972; they are a modern day 'Tolpuddle' and trade unionists and socialists must respond to this miscarriage



ASLEF members join the call for an enquiry and a pardon for the Shrewsbury pickets



Union banners passing by the cathedral – looking for support wherever they can find it!



ASLEF members take a step for justice at this year's rally and demonstration

in the appropriate fashion.

The ConDem government will make the situation a whole lot worse, introducing even more oppressive employment legislation. You have only to look at the plans of Boris Johnson and the CBI that were reported in the last edition of the Journal – and the UK already has some of the most vehemently aggressive anti-union laws in Europe.

We must fight to clear the pickets' names and to argue for trade union rights, for the repeal of the anti-trade union laws and stand up against the agents of big business.

● To affiliate to the campaign or for further information, contact:

Mike Abbott, Secretary, Justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets Campaign, c/o Merseyside Hazards & Environmental Centre 1st Floor, 96 Bold Street, Liverpool, L1 4HY
Tel: 0151 709 9948; Mobile: 07907307853
justice4pickets@yahoo.co.uk

CUTTING BACK IS NO WAY FO

**says General Secretary
Keith Norman**

I AM grateful to Jonathan Bray for his article in this month's Journal. He makes a convincing case for investment in rail and other forms of public transport and emphasises that cuts in this area would harm the entire population – not just drivers and other railway staff, but British industry and society as a whole.

The cuts announced in transport are bad enough, but I am concerned about what might be coming along the track. The government review of future franchising could be a disaster, notably for freight, if it incorporates the track into the franchises. Imminent franchises include both the east and west coast lines and Transpennine Express – and all the indications are that the government favours longer franchises with less regulation.

Then we have the cloud of Sir Roy McNulty's 'Rail Value for Money' study hanging over us. His remit is to 'examine the overall cost structure of all elements of the railway sector and identify options for improving value for money for passengers and the

taxpayer, while continuing to expand capacity as necessary and drive up passenger satisfaction'. My fear is that he will focus more on the first part of his remit than the second. He was due to present an interim report last month but it did not emerge. The final report is expected next Spring.

The spending cuts announced so far have not hit the railway industry as badly as some had expected. But we have not emerged unscathed. For example

- The Department for Transport budget is due to fall by 21% in real terms over the next 5 years.
- Transport infrastructure is to be focused on profitability 'focusing on projects that deliver greater benefits'.
- The government claims that 'some public transport fare increases will be unavoidable'. The cap on fares will increase to 3% above RPI from 2012.
- Network Rail has already been ordered to make 'efficiency savings' of 21% over the next three years.
- There will be an overall cut of around 20% in government aid to Transport for London.
- There is silence concerning the upgrading – and financing – of Thameslink.



What will the McNulty report have in store? One thing is sure – it's not going to look like a Christmas present ...

- Any decision on the £7.5 billion InterCity Express Programme (IEP) has been deferred.

To be fair to the current government (rather against my normal inclinations!) there are some bright elements. They appear to realise the importance of the railways both to economic growth and to the environment. We must ensure they hold to commitments they have made such as

- asserting that they are 'prioritising economic infrastructure that supports growth (such as investment in transport) and the transition to a low carbon economy'.
- funding Crossrail and thus providing an additional 10% capacity to London's rail

INVEST IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT – EVERYB



**says Jonathan
Bray, Director
of the pteg
Support Unit**

WHEN politicians want to be seen to be doing something about creating more jobs from transport – the temptation to write blank cheques for the motor industry always seems to overwhelm them. They just can't seem to get mental newsreels of labour-intensive Ford factories churning out Model T Fords out of their heads!

However as a new pteg report shows - pound for pound - you get more jobs from investing in sustainable transport modes than you do from investing in cars and motorways. Not only that but you get a greener world and a greener economy too.

The Ekosgen report (commissioned by pteg, Sustrans and CBT) was the first attempt in

many years to map out the evidence that exists for the direct jobs that are created by investing in the different modes. It found that

- A reduction in car travel and a transfer to public transport would result in a net increase in employment as on average rail and bus travel generates more jobs per passenger km than car travel
- Research into transportation investment in the US provides evidence that investing in public transportation produced twice as many jobs per dollar as investing in roads
- The UK Rail Industry employs around 190,000 people and contributes £9bn annually to the national economy
- The creation of 100 direct rail jobs supports 140 indirect and induced jobs whereas 100 direct motor industry jobs create only 48 indirect and induced jobs
- One additional school bus generates over 1.13 FTE jobs, one driver and 0.2 ancillary staff. Further

jobs will be generated through other parts of the supply chain. The ratio is also likely to increase when considering the employment impact of a routine passenger bus service

The report concludes that, 'It is widely accepted that sustainable transport is at the heart of tackling congestion, in delivering important international commitments on climate change and bringing about the change to a low carbon economy.

'In addition this research firmly demonstrates that the sustainable transport sector also employs significant numbers of people (estimated at almost half a million jobs) which can make an important contribution to the economic recovery and growth. Such employment compares favourably with investment in the motor industry.

'The research also shows that the sector employs a diverse range of skills and occupations in a variety

of transport and non-transport roles.'

Not much evidence for putting car scrappage schemes before investing in greener transport there!

EVIDENCE FROM THE STATES

In the US the Obama administration recognises the role that investment in transport can play in job creation through the TIGER (Transport Investment Generating Economic Recovery) programme.

The US Department of Transport has recently announced the 10,000th scheme financed under their TIGER scheme. Part of the US plan for economic recovery, TIGER awards discretionary grants to state and local governments and transport agencies for capital transport projects expected to have a significant impact on the nation, metropolitan area or region.

It aims to create and save jobs and act as a spur for economic

FORWARD

network.

- spending £6 billion on upgrades and capital maintenance of London Underground
- delivering a new high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, and then to both Manchester and Leeds
- £14 billion of funding to Network Rail, including major improvements to the East Coast Mainline, station upgrades at Birmingham New Street and network improvements in Yorkshire, around Manchester and the Barry to Cardiff corridor.
- assigning over £10 billion for local transport schemes including extending Midland Metro and upgrading the Tyne and Wear Metro.

My aim as your general secretary is not to score political points over any government. It is to ensure that members of our Association have secure and well-paid jobs in a thriving industry.

If the coalition provides the conditions for this to continue, ASLEF will not deliberately seek to pick a quarrel with them, as others might. But if our industry comes under threat from franchising changes or as a result of the McNulty report, we will not hesitate to defend ourselves.

I hope this will not be necessary.



BODY GAINS!

activity and growth. It's true that not all these schemes are public transport schemes – but it's also true that public transport is doing well out of these investment programmes partly because there is a strong recognition in the US that investing in public transport is good for jobs. The US public transportation lobby has also been very effective in making that case.

There's certainly scope for the UK public transport lobby (including the manufacturers and supply industry) to make more of the employment case for public transport investment.

The Ekosgen report found that although the evidence that was available was compelling – there's a need for more, and more recent research. This could all help change that old newsreel in our politicians' heads from thinking 'cars' when they think 'jobs'. Instead they should be thinking trains, buses, bikes and trams.

○ Jonathan's background is in both

transport campaigning and transport policy. One of the founders and co-ordinators of the campaign against the national road programme in the early nineties, he later led the campaign against rail privatisation. He has also worked for the Campaign for Better Transport on a range of sustainable transport issues as well as having considerable transport policy experience with clients such as local transport authorities, the BBC and the Strategic Rail Authority.

○ The Passenger Transport Executive Group (pteg) brings together and promotes the interests of the six Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) in England. Nottingham City Council, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and Transport for London are associate members.

○ A full copy of the Ekosgen report which Jonathan refers to can be found in the publications section of (www.pteg.net) under 'policy reports'



Philippa Roles - when she's not in the gym, she's training!

WHEN Philippa Roles was a young schoolgirl in Neath in South Wales her PE teacher suggested that, as she was tall, she should have a go at throwing the discus. To her surprise, she found she could throw it remarkable distances – to the extent that only three months later, after entering the national championships, she was the Welsh Under-13 champion! It was a path that would eventually take this Southern train driver to the Olympic and Commonwealth games.

'It was a relief finding I could throw the discus,' she says with the Welsh lilt she will never lose. 'It meant I could give up swimming which I was doing before. It was doing my head in. I was up at six ploughing up and down a pool for hours before school. And I wasn't actually very good at it. I thought to myself, well at least throwing the discus is going to be easier than swimming!'

She has persisted and honed that skill to the extent that she's represented her country at the Athens Olympics and at four consecutive Commonwealth Games – including the ones in India in October. She threw a very creditable 57.99 metres and came fourth.

'I'm still feeling down about it if I'm honest,' Philippa says. 'I'd thrown over 60 metres the day before and I really thought I could have won. My personal best throw is 62.89 metres. I know that physically I was up for it, but there was some nagging doubts on the day. And if your confidence isn't there, you're not going to win.'

For many of us, to be the fourth best person at something in the entire Commonwealth would be a source of considerable pride. For Philippa it was worse than disappointing. 'It was heartbreaking. It was terrible,' she says. 'It's hard to pick yourself up again after you've had this target in your mind for years. It's like the 2012 Olympics in London. If I am serious about it I'll have to start serious training from January. To put in all that time and effort and not manage to produce your best on the day is ... well, you can't imagine how deflated you can feel.'

And it certainly is effort. When most of us think of Olympic athletes, we see in our minds a toned, glamorous and fit person performing at a sporting event in a far-away city for a few minutes. We don't consider what it takes to get there.

'It does take a lot of discipline. If you're going to succeed in any event you need to be quick, coordinated and strong. I was lucky that we've got a really good ASLEF rep here at



Philippa ready to book on at Victoria: 'Sometimes the days don't seem long enough to fit everything in,' she says

Victoria in Graham Hoy and that the drivers in my depot and the company were really understanding and supportive. Between them they let me work permanent lates running up to the Commonwealth Games. That was a great help in organising my training.'

Which involved what?

“ THE DRIVERS IN MY DEPOT AND THE COMPANY WERE REALLY UNDERSTANDING ”

'Getting up and going straight to the gym, taking my uniform with me so I could go straight on to work when I'd finished. Usually I'd start with rowing. It takes some of the pressure off my back, which I really messed up years ago through bad training schedules. Then I spend a couple of hours lifting weights. Some days it feels as if it's taking forever. Sometimes I'll do running and then an hour of throwing, usually about 80 times. I have a bag that will hold 15 discuses so it saves time

going back and forth.

'Then it's shower, something to eat, and off to work. I do a shift, crawl home, sleep – and start again.

'At times it has given me wonderful moments of pleasure and recognition, but looking back I've sacrificed a lot of my life for this sport. I haven't had a holiday for 15 years because I use my leave to go to events. Yes, I know people think it's a holiday to go away to international events, but it's not. Basically you fly in, train, perform and leave. You don't really see much of the country. Wherever you are, it always seems the same. The same event, the same people'

I suppose being a top athlete does mean you are in a rather exclusive club, and wonder how Philippa gets on with the other members

'There is always a good sense of comradeship in the Welsh team, but not so much with the British one. There are a lot who are just there for themselves, and many are from different backgrounds with rich parents or sponsorships. They are often more concerned with their mobile phones or their new cars. They live on a different planet from those of us who have to work full time to pay the mortgage. They can't believe I have to pay



It takes a lot of discipline and effort to be a top discus thrower – but Philippa manages it

for my own accommodation to compete in about ten weekend events in the UK!

'Mind you, the whole experience of international events is like living in a bubble where the outside world doesn't seem to exist. I find it pretty weird. Dealing with all that is another skill.'

Suddenly, Philippa cracks up with laughter. 'Do you know, talking to you I suddenly think I must be mad to carry on with it! But I'm 32 now and that is coming up to the peak for my



She combines being a full-time train driver with being an Olympic athlete – but Philippa's still smiling!

event. And I do want to take part in the London Olympics. There is a lot of hype about it, but it is a great opportunity and very exciting for British athletes.'

It is not surprising that at times Philippa feels ground down by a sport to which she has given the last 20 years of her life. After starting in competitions largely in Wales as a member of the Swansea Harriers Athletic Club, Philippa decided in 2003 that if she was to improve, she'd need to move to London and specifically Crystal Palace. 'At that time that was the only

place with facilities that would let me improve, so I moved here.'

She did a variety of jobs, including fund raising and she applied to the police and prison services before being offered a job as a duty manager at Victoria, and then Clapham Junction. Then, four years ago, she moved over to driving and now works on suburban work for Southern.

'It's the best thing I ever did,' she says. 'I like driving trains – even more than I hate sitting on them as a passenger! It's a job I really enjoy. That's something throwing the discus did for me. Whenever I have a bad day, I just think, 'You could be working in Tesco's in Swansea!'

Philippa has worked incredibly hard and with remarkable dedication to get to the top reaches of her chosen sport, and deserves all the support and encouragement she can get.

Knowing train drivers, I say that I don't suppose her workmates ever take the mickey?

'Oh right!' she says with a chuckle. 'That's one thing you can rely on ...!'

Philippa then wanders off across the concourse to book on. I'm sure we all wish her every success in the London Olympics. If anyone deserves it, she does.

Would you be prepared to be featured in future editions of this column, or know someone who would be a good subject? If you do, please let us know at the ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB or journal@aslef.org.uk

WHAT THE UNION WAS DOING 100 AND 50 YEARS AGO

100 years ago the Journal included a mysterious report from Slough - while **50 years ago** readers were treated to a few literary allusions ...

100 YEARS AGO

In the December 1910 edition 'Shovel Engineer' reported on an ominous location for the Slough branch meeting ...

"On Sunday, October 30th, an open meeting of enginemen and firemen was held in the branch club-room, to hear Brother Fisher give his report of the interview, which took place in September, between our Permanent Deputation and Mr. Churchward. Our meeting was called for 6.30 p.m. At that time I am pleased to report we had a splendid attendance, which filled the room.

During the week our club-room is used by an athletic club, who have a long rope suspended from the ceiling, which they use in the course of their lessons. One of our members was very much concerned about this rope until he was informed by Brother Fisher why it was there, after which we proceeded to business. Our branch chairman occupied the chair and Mr. Smith, one of our first-class enginemen, the vice-chair."

50 YEARS AGO

In December 1960, D. K. Pullen

concerned himself with Lady Chatterley and the Railway Pay Committee of Enquiry ...

"Lady Chatterley, so I believe, had her problems. With Santa Claus already stocking up his sleigh in readiness for the annual race around the chimney-pots it is reasonable to suppose that quite a few of our lads will spend a bit of their leisure time by the old yule-log fire, engrossed in the pages of their brand-new 3s. 6d. unexpurgated copy of Lawrence's masterpiece.

Many of the widely discussed four-letter words of Anglo-Saxon origin contained in this work will already be familiar to people who for the past six months have been struggling to understand the many complex problems raised by another well-known author, Mr. C. W. Guilleband, in his famous

commentary on railway wages and conditions of employment.

Indeed, had our people the same gift of authorship as D. H. Lawrence, many novels depicting life among Footplatemen would now be flooding the nation's bookshops and libraries. Their vocabularies would be so colourful as to make the fair Lady Chatterley seem like a down-at-heel old hag by comparison.....

.....One of the many claims to fame of the Three Wise Men of the Railway Pay Committee of Inquiry was their recommendation to reduce the colossal number of different wage-groups to a mere fourteen."

○ Extracts selected and edited by Jane Pimlott

Retired Members Forum 'instructive, enjoyable and entertaining'

says **John Pipe**,
retired member,
Norwich

I AM writing to express my gratitude to my trade union for giving me the opportunity to attend the Retired Members' Weekend Forum in Scarborough at the end of October.

In one sense it was unfortunate that none of the three Labour Members of Parliament who were invited managed to accept their invitations. But in my humble

opinion this did not lower the quality nor the success of the Forum. In fact, I would even argue the reverse was true.

Our first speaker was the EC President Alan Donnelly who gave a first class address on where ASLEF stands today in terms of its industrial activity, its finances and its relationship with the Labour Party.

Our second speaker was Wendy Hurst, the secretary of the union's women's representative committee. She spoke about her railway life as an engine driver. Working as a woman in 'a man's world' had not proven too difficult



Retired members gathered for high jinx at Low Hall!

as far as working and socialising with her male colleagues. It was, she said, only the management who found it difficult to accept the new situation, with reluctance to provide, for example, women-only toilet facilities, as well as other issues.

Her contribution was well received by her audience of 'old timers' – many of whom had never seen a female 'second man', let alone a driver!

WINNER WENDY EXPLAINS LEGAL SERVICES

Wendy was followed by Rachel Beauchamp from the legal advice department of Thompsons Solicitors. She proved a very experienced speaker who knew how to wet one's appetite with a brief insight as to how her department worked as it dealt with matters like accident claims, powers of attorney and drawing up wills. All these services are available to members of ASLEF's Retired Members' Section. Advice is available, by phone, on 0808 100 8009.

When she opened the floor for questions she was able to show her expertise as she answered the many queries off her head without needing to search through notes or references. All in all she was an interesting and knowledgeable young lady and a credit to Thompsons.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND FIGHTING CUTS

In place of the session allocated to the 'missing MPs', Chair Ray Jackson invited Mick Lyons of Leeds to speak on the challenges facing local government in these difficult times. As a councillor of long standing he was most informative – so that having no MP turned out to be to our advantage! Ray then opened a debate on the (then) proposed



Presentations to John Evans (93) and Matt Daley (90)



Although interesting, we have no idea what was going on in this picture!

Tory/Lib government cuts programme. This developed into a very educational and lively discussion with some heated exchange from almost every delegate present. I must say that the Chair managed to handle the situation admirably with a little help of both Northern and cockney wit and the usual footplate banter.

Our final speaker before we broke up on the Sunday was Tosh McDonald, the EC member for District 4 where the meeting took place. He based his contribution on the present political climate both to compensate for the MPs not being present and because the President had covered ASLEF activity. His resounding speech was clear in both content and delivery – for which those of us who have difficulty with hearing were duly grateful. This was reflected in the standing ovation we gave him at the end.

Add to these gems the social side and fraternal atmosphere and it all made up for an instructive, enjoyable and entertaining weekend. If I were you, I'd get my name down as soon as possible for next year's event!

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RON ('COALBOX') COLBOURN A FOOTPLATE MAN THROUGH AND THROUGH

RON started his railway career as a fireman at Shoeburyness Depot. When he was displaced due to electrification in the early 60s he moved to Stratford 30A. His next move was to become a Ripple Lane Pathfinder where he remained as a Driver until he took early retirement a couple of years before his beloved depot closed its doors for the last time in July 1993.

Ron was a popular bloke amongst the chaps and in those days when there was an abundance of spare train crew and not enough seats for them all

to sit on, you'd find him running the card school.

Ron made the most of his retirement. He was always out and about with his good lady wife Doreen, travelling mainly by train. Although he used his Freedom Bus Pass a few times he never drove a car, preferring his trusted mode of transport - the old Halford push-bike.

Ron had a variety of pastimes and liked to show off his cactus, which he referred to as his pricks! He was a footplate man through-and-through. He loved anything to do with railways, be it books,

films or steam and always enjoyed seeing his old work-mates at various ex-BR and LT railway clubs to catch up and chat about the old days.

Sadly Ron passed away in St Luke's Hospice in Basildon eleven weeks after being diagnosed with cancer. In the family's words 'his bunker ran out of coal and his boiler ran out of steam and he has probably gone loose-coupled to the big train-shed in the sky' - where he's probably running the card school, chasing the lady and enjoying a chat with those who have gone before him.

Ron's funeral was well attended and the burial service was held at The New Pitsea Cemetery. Doreen and the family then invited us to to the local football club for some light refreshment and a glass of ale while we chatted and reminisced, celebrating Ron's life that stretched from 17 January 1930 until 9 October 2010.

Ron will be sadly missed by all and our condolences go to Doreen, Lorraine, Terry, Garry, Tony family and friends.

Cliff Blackwell, Reporter, Tilbury Branch

ALBERT ATKINSON A MAN OF ACTION AND PRINCIPLE

We reported the passing of former ASLEF Organising Secretary Albert Atkinson in the November issue. This fuller obituary supplements the sad news.

Usually funerals are melancholic and grim affairs but in the case of former ASLEF EC President and Eastern Region District Organiser Albert Atkinson it was an uplifting celebration of the 91-year-old's full and significant life.

There are few left in our industry who would remember Albert as EC President (1963-64). But although he retired in 1983, the effects of Albert's actions are still there to be seen.

Starting as an Engine Cleaner at Newton Heath (Manchester) Albert followed his brother into the line of promotion to driver. He joined the army in 1939 and after his evacuation from Dunkirk he was recalled to his essential railway work. At this time he became an ASLEF activist, holding office in the Newton Heath branch where he was always regarded highly by his work mates and fellow trade unionists. As an activist he travelled the country building support and solidarity during the 1955 strike.

In 1962 Albert was a member of the ASLEF executive when the first of Beeching's infamous 'Re-shaping the Railways' reports came out. There were some within ASLEF who supported Beeching's plans but Albert was vociferous in his opposition to the cuts. It was because of his clear leadership on the issue that his EC colleagues elected him as their President to work with the union's new General Secretary Albert Griffiths. Albert had replaced Bill Evans, who retired early and suddenly.

In the mid-sixties Albert was the organising officer for Ireland, a post subsequently held by Ray Buckton. After

this, from 1966 until his retirement in 1983, he worked as the District Organiser for the former Eastern Region of British Rail (then District 1).

He gave much of his time to ASLEF and there were many who kept their jobs and homes due to his advocacy and interventions. He didn't suffer fools gladly, was strong-willed and the Local and Sectional Council Representatives were never in any doubt as to what should - and shouldn't - be done in the turbulent 1970s and early 1980s.

It was uplifting at his funeral to hear his record as a fighter, activist and leader in difficult times - but also touching to glimpse the family man who was held in such high regard by his wife, children, grand-children and great grand-children.

It is clear that the world, and ASLEF, would have been a much poorer place if he had not had his full and active life.

**Simon Weller,
National Organiser**



THREE LOSSES FOR WORKSOP

IT IS with deep regret that I write to inform you of the passing of three retired members, all of whom were ex-Worksop and Barrow Hill drivers.

Graham Robinson passed away on 29 May after a long and courageous battle against lung cancer. Graham spent the majority of his career at Harrow Hill near Chesterfield in Derbyshire. Although he also went on to Stratford for a short while during the 1960s he wound up his career at Worksop in March 1993 after Barrow Hill closed in 1991. Graham was aged 74 when he died.

Bryan Johnson also spent the majority of his footplate career at Barrow Hill after starting at Staveley. Bryan was also a driver at Worksop after the closure of his former depot, and retired on the same day in March 1993 as Graham. He also suffered a long period of illness before passing away at the age of 77 years.

Douggie Briggs died in October, giving way to acute liver failure after a short illness. Doug spent the majority of his footplate career at Barrow Hill but also spent time at Sheffield Midland and was also at Worksop from 1991 until his retirement in 1999. Dougie died just two weeks before his 68th birthday.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the friends and families of all our departed brothers at this difficult time.

K. Gillett, Secretary, Worksop branch

EDMUND ROBERT YARHAM FROM AND TO NORFOLK

'BOB' as we all knew him was born in Downham Market in Norfolk, moving to Liverpool to work at a LNER depot shunting on the docks. There he met and married Hilda. Together they were blessed with two sons.

In 1953 Bob moved to Kings Cross as a fireman, before becoming a driver. He spent a time in the Hamden Club before he acquired a railway place at Tottenham.

Later, while still at Kings Cross, he moved to live in Redhill in Surrey, where he lived until his retirement. Then he went back to his roots, a place called Beccles in the county of his birth.

There is a tale that Bob went to an auction to buy the cottage he lived in, and discovered after a successful bid that he'd bought not just his cottage but the whole row of three!

He will be greatly missed as a father, grand-father and great-grandfather.

The funeral service took place at St Luke's Church, Beccles on 6 October followed by a burial at Beccles Cemetery. Bob passed away in hospital on 14 September, aged 89 years. May he RIP.

**Peter Smith, Reporter,
Retired Members Section**

**FREDDIE GOFF AN INSPIRATIONAL CARD**

IT IS with great sadness that I have to inform ASLEF of the passing of retired Brighton Driver Freddie Goff on 28 September 2010 at the age of 81.

Fred entered the footplate grade at the age of 15 on 22 May 1944 at Newhaven, where he worked up through the grades from Cleaner to Fireman and Engineman. When he was made redundant with the closure of Newhaven Loco depot on the 9 September 1963, Fred transferred to Brighton Loco/Mixed Traction depots. He stayed at Brighton until he retired on 10 February 1994 after completing almost 50 years (all bar a few weeks) of dedicated railway service.

Fred spent many a night sitting in Brighton mess-room waiting to book on duty or for his first train home. This was due to Fred not having any means of transport so he would catch the first/last train to and from Newhaven. It didn't take him long to get a card

school going – known to by many as 'Goff's Gamble. Many of our grades became victims of his various card games!

Fred took on the role of Branch Secretary of Brighton No1 Branch in 1970. It was a position he retained until he decided to stand down a decade later, making him the longest serving Secretary the branch has ever had.

During the mid 1980's Fred carried out the prestige role of 'Royal Train Driver' for the Brighton Area. He carried it out with great honour and dignity working the Royal Trains between London Victoria and Tattenham Corner on Epsom Derby days among others. He was the last Brighton driver to hold this position.

Fred will always be remembered as a truly great 'footplate character', a loyal and proud ASLEF member with a great sense of humour. His one-liners put a smile on many a face regardless of the situation they were in.

Fred's funeral was held at the Downs Crematorium in Brighton on 11 October. It brought together many of his former footplate colleagues, past and present, to pay their respects to a fellow driver of whom they all had great memories.

**Paul Edwards, LDC Secretary,
Brighton**

STRATFORD LOSE JACK KNIGHT AND GEORGE BUCKLE

IT IS with great sadness that I report the recent passing away of two loyal retired members of the Stratford branch – Brothers Jack Knight and George Buckle.

Jack started on the railway in 1950, working his way up to driver through the familiar route of cleaner and then fireman. He spent most of his career at Stratford after initially joining the railway at Epping.

Jack, along with Frank Moore, formed the Stratford Social and Welfare Club which helped members at Stratford financially in times of hardship, as well as organising social events for members and their families including trips to the theatre, dog racing, kids panto, Euro

Disney and the Orient Express. After he retired, Jack still kept in touch with a regular meeting in a hostelry at Stratford.

George was a well-respected and liked driver at the depot. He was a first-class car mechanic and many a train driver had George to thank for keeping their car on the road or getting it through the MOT test.

We extend our condolences to Jack's and George's families and friends during this sad time.

P. J. Dodgson, Secretary, Stratford Branch

RONALD ('RON') TODD A PROUD AND LOYAL UNION MAN

I AM sorry to have to tell you that my father, Ronald (Ron) Todd died on 18 April this year at the age of 75. He was a lifelong railwayman and a very proud ASLEF member. Originally from York, Ron later moved to Doncaster.

He started on the railway as a cleaner on 17 December 1951. He then became a fireman on the footplate and shovelled many a ton of coal up and down the country.

His check number at York was 686, and at Doncaster his number was 5351.

He was made up to a Driver at Doncaster and worked there until his Retirement in 1996.

Ron and his ASLEF pals at York attended many union dinners at various locations in York, and he was good friends with the former ASLEF general secretary Ray Buckton.

He was a strong supporter of the NUM - as were all of the branch members at Doncaster - during the battle with Thatcher in the '80s.

Ron's career on the railway lasted 45 years, he often said that he loved going to work - which I'm sure many people cannot say today.

We were pleased that a union rep came to dad's funeral. I'm afraid I didn't catch his name, but I think he was called Brian.

I would just like ASLEF to be aware of my father's passing, as he was proud and loyal union man. I am very proud of my dad and I miss him every day.

Paul. Todd, son

MICK MAGSON: A TRAGIC LOSS AT 38

IT IS with great sadness and regret that I have to announce the sad passing of Michael Magson who died suddenly on 7 October from heart failure at just 38 years.

Mick started on the railway as a Shunter before progressing to Driver. He was an extremely popular and well-liked colleague and workmate.

His funeral was well attended by his workmates not only at Chingford but other NX/EA Depots in our area.

Mick leaves a wife, Selina, and three Children, Charlie, Lauren and Jake. Our sympathies are with them all at this most difficult of times.

S. P. Jestico, Secretary, Chingford branch



Driver Dorrington (with beard) with Rodney and Richard

Exeter members held in highest-steam!

Richard Westlake and Rodney French are the retired 'A' Team of Exeter HSS LDC. They both gave long service to the Railway and to ASLEF. One of their many contributions was to secure a future for an Inter City depot (now HSS) at Exeter.

In recognition of this, both drivers were presented with original oil paintings depicting their Southern roots, Rodney at Exmouth Junction and Richard at Okehampton.

However the icing on the cake came when Exeter ASLEF member Ian Jonas organised a footplate ride for both drivers on 'Braunton', a Bullied West Country Pacific, rescued from the scrap yard at Barry Island and totally restored by the WSR.

This was an

amazing opportunity for both men to take a trip down memory lane and fire this famous engine in service from Bishops Lidyard to Minehead and back.

The engine went tender first for the outward leg, with Richard and Rodney alternating between footplate and buffet car (nothing changes!).

On arrival at Minehead 'Braunton' was shunted on to the turntable and turned for the appreciative crowd of onlookers - twice in fact, so she could return the right way around. During the break Bro. Jonas presented both men with a WSR special edition tea mug.

The train made the return journey double headed with No 88, one of only two surviving locos

built by the LMS for the Somerset and Dorset Railway, in the lead. Richard had a ride on both engines, however Rodney decided resting his back in the buffet car was a regrettable necessity.

It was a fantastic day out for both men and also for me, as I had never been on the footplate of a steam loco. It makes you realise what a hard and skilled job it was in those days, often working in very difficult conditions. The current membership of ASLEF owe a great debt to Drivers like Richard Westlake, Rodney French and many others who worked hard so we can enjoy working conditions that are much easier and safer.

This day was made possible through the generosity of the West Somerset Railway. A special thank you must go to Bro Ian Jonas who organised the trip, also to Driver Alan Dorrington for having us on his footplate. Cheers! **Giles Bowerman, Secretary, Exeter Branch**



Rodney firing Braunton

Upcoming events

STRATFORD REUNION 29 JANUARY

The Stratford Depot reunion will be held on Saturday 29 January in the Railway Tavern, Angel Lane, Stratford from 19.00 until late. Everyone is welcome. If you need any further information please contact Barry Moore on 07900-132192 or by email Barry.Moore@dbschenker.com If anyone wants to stay at the Railway Tavern please contact Jan or Tom directly on 020 8534 3123, through info@railwaytavernhotel.co.uk or by visiting the hotel website which is www.railwaytavernhotel.co.uk

RIPPLE LANE REUNION 3 DECEMBER

The Ripple Lane Retired get-together will be held on the first Friday of the month (3 December) at the Hornchurch LT club next to the station on the District Line from mid-day until the last man is standing!

Banbury welcomes Stan and Brian

I AM writing on behalf of the Banbury Branch to belatedly express our thanks to Stan Moran and Brian Corbett for their attendance at our recent branch meeting.

After the usual business, Stan and Brian gave us an interesting and informative report on the latest news from around the district. This was followed by a lively debate on the issues currently affecting our depot. I think all the members present were impressed that our officers are prepared to listen to our concerns and offer constructive advice on ways to achieve our objectives.

The meeting concluded with Stan presenting three Drivers with long service awards. AHCENE Arfi received his 5 years badge, Guy Harris his 20 years, and our Health and Safety Rep Jim Browne his 35 years service badge.

We look forward to welcoming Brian and Stan again in the future. **Andy Kelly, Secretary, Banbury branch**



Stan hands out the long service awards to the Banbury Band of Brothers!



These are the pages where you talk to us. We welcome your letters, either by mail to the **ASLEF Journal at 9 Arkwright Road London NW3 6AB** or by email to **journal@aslef.org.uk**. Because of our space constraints, please try to keep your contributions as short as you can. This month we continue our **STAR LETTER feature**. The immensely lucky winner will pocket a rich range of ASLEF regalia!

THANKS FOR PUTTING UP WITH ME!

I WOULD like to thank Nigel Roebuck, the Regional Organiser, for all his hard work in procuring my early retirement on ill health grounds and I'd like to thank all my colleagues at Rotherham for putting up with me!

Keep smiling - and remember your union is your best friend.

Ian Sidebottom, Rotherham driver, retired

POOR PAY, RICH DON'T

I CAN'T help but agree with Keith Norman's comments in last month's Journal. I took early retirement in August 2006 and after about 8 months I received a letter from Inland Revenue stating that I had been wrongly taxed on my pension. They admitted it was their mistake, not mine.

Like most working people, I'd paid tax since I left school in 1961, and I've never been unemployed. The Inland however said I owed £535 which they would take installments over the next year.

I contested this of course, but still got told I had to pay. What could I do? They've got you by the curlies.

Like Keith said: the poor pay, and the rich get away with it.

Dave Davis, Retired C2C Driver

WHY WE NEED ASLEF

OUR General Secretary is right to refer Bro Byrne (Letters, October Journal) to 'Engines and Men', but there was a much more recent illustration of why we need ASLEF. Radio 4 recently broadcast an interesting programme examining rates of pay. This featured an interview with Bob Crow in which train drivers' pay was raised.

Bob didn't refer to the role trade unions have played in achieving our current pay - how could he when it was ASLEF and ASLEF alone that made the gains we achieved? Even more illuminating was his nostalgia for the time when tube drivers were paid the same as London bus drivers. He could not understand how train drivers could be paid more. Bro. Hill from Longsight would appear to be absolutely correct when he asks where we would be if the

LOOK WHO YOU SUPPORT IF YOU'RE FLYING RYAN

MEMBERS may be interested to know that on 18 October, Michael O'Leary, the infamously big mouthed boss of Ryanair, demanded that the EU introduce legislation banning the right to strike amongst 'essential staff' and allowing employers to sack anybody who does strike.

He isn't so stupid to think the EU actually has the power to do this, so it is just another of his stunts. But it does demonstrate his views on workers'

rights and it will of course give weight to similar calls from certain supporters of the Con-Dem government in this country.

And once again, he is demanding that they reduce passengers' rights and his company's liability to look after them.

Something to bear in mind when thinking of booking flights in future?

Steve Bratt, ATW, Crewe

RMT had negotiated for us.

I do, however take issue with the tone of Bro Hill's letter criticising Bob Crow's socialist principles. Quite apart from the obvious point that we should not be sniping at our fellow trade union as they take action (on the Underground currently), reading the October issue shows clearly our problems with the politics of the Labour Party.

Take one example. Former Labour minister Sadiq Khan tries to claim Labour was embarking on a programme of railway improvements which will now be lost. They were in government for 13 years, and chose to announce this programme prior to an election everybody expected them to lose! He also claims the Beeching cuts were a Tory responsibility. The report came out under the Tories - but was actually implemented by the Labour government.

So if this was an 'ideologically motivated attack' then it is an ideology shared by both Labour and the Tories. It is time for all trade unions to take a less craven attitude to the Labour Party. If they do not represent our interests we need a party that does.

Peter Bell, Skipton

WHY THE RMT WANT ASLEF

I READ with confusion the letter from the dual ASLEF/RMT driver from Nottingham (October Journal) who supports the

concept of one union in the rail industry.

I was in the RMT for 14 years before entering the driving grade and I can assure brother Byrne that drivers are wanted in the RMT for no other reason than to provide industrial muscle to further Bob Crow's political goals.

Drivers are where we are today because we have one union made up of drivers fighting for drivers. RMT activists spend more time sniping at ASLEF than concentrating on improving the pay and conditions of people they are recognised to represent.

Steve Hill, Newton Heath

THANKS FROM THE CHELSEA PENSIONERS

I WRITE to say thank you for your very generous donation of £2,000 towards the Chelsea Pensioners' Appeal, money I understand ASLEF is saving by not sending out Christmas cards this year.

It is a most unexpected but hugely welcome gift and I should be most grateful if you would pass on my thanks to your colleagues.

But beyond my personal thanks lie those of our In Pensioners. The money will go towards their new en-suite accommodation which should still be standing in 300 years time. So

from all of them now here, and from those yet to come over the next three centuries – a huge thank you.

**General the Lord Walker, Governor,
Royal Hospital Chelsea**

GREAT SUPPORT FROM A TOP UNION

I HAVE just won my Clause 9 appeal and would like to say a very big 'Thank you' to my union.

It was an extremely stressful time for both my wife and myself, I am very grateful to my local Fratton LDC for all their support and to Shaun Seymour and Martin Dye who have been excellent throughout.

I have had to use the services of ASLEF twice in my career, and both times they have been superb. So to any driver having second thoughts about staying in our union, let me say this: please think again as ASLEF really does help people save their jobs, and it offers great support to their families.

Thanks again.

Dave Amey, Fratton Driver

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

I read with disbelief the Journal's centre spread on the Labour Party conference.

When will the union realise that the (old or new) Labour Party's actions do not represent the interests of our members? In fact, it is a

GENEROUS DRIVERS

ON behalf of the Scottish Cot Death Trust, my family and I would like to thank from the bottom of our hearts all those who made a donation to my appeal fund. We have been bowled over by the tremendous generosity of the ASLEF family, individuals and branches, across the UK.

I'd especially like to thank Polmadie Branch for coordinating the ASLEF appeal on my behalf.

It gives us great comfort that many people we don't know have supported this cause. With your support we have raised over £14,000 and will continue to do more. If we, with your help, can save just one child's life it will have



The Polmadie branch presents a cheque for £900 to Robert

been well worth the effort.

A website has been set up in memory of my grandson Robbie. This can be viewed at www.robbie.barnes.2006-2009.muchloved.com.

Once again, many thanks.
Robert Barnes, Driver, Polmadie Branch

thoroughly anti-working class organisation.

When was the last time that the Labour leadership, in power or out, declared support for trade union members' struggles? Have they abolished the anti-trade union legislation brought in by the Conservatives? No.

Instead, they have consistently pursued aggressive policies, at home and abroad, designed to further the interests of a small parasitical property-owning class - to the detriment of the rest of us. Two major military

campaigns during their most recent tenure resulted in death, suffering and carnage on an immense scale. Who suffered? Not the Labour leadership, but workers from these islands and our brothers and sisters overseas. Here the orders of the day have been commercialisation, liberalisation and 'work until you drop'.

Labour? Tories? Liberals? You couldn't squeeze a ballot paper between them!

Jim North, Wimbledon Branch

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

To advertise in the ASLEF Journal please contact Sarah Francis on 020 7317 8600 or sfrancis@aslef.org.uk



FIRST EDITION of the only recognised Tram/Light Rail ASLEF Branch. CROYDON TRAM/LIGHT RAIL No1 (270) Badge cost £5 each with £1 P&P. Cheques payable to: "CTLRNo1" and sent to David Brinkworth, 6 Peregrine Court, 47 Albemarle Road, Beckenham, BR3 5HL or via Paypal david@brinkworth.me.uk



FAVERSHAM BRANCH (077) has finally launched its 25th Anniversary ASLEF/NUM badge. They cost £10 each including P&P. A few Faversham Branch Centenary badges remain

available at £5 each including P&P. To order please contact the Branch Secretary, Steve Gurdler, 18 Hunters Way West, Chatham, Kent ME5 7HL. steve.gurdler@aslefonline.co.uk or 07941 110473



FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES and FOOTBALL BADGES bought by collector. Please call or email with any pre-1965 programmes or other early football memorabilia. Martin Scott 07718 131622 Email: scottfootball@hotmail.com



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CITY OF LONDON BADGES, one 10-year and one depot badge. Depot badges are numbered 1-150. There are only 150 of each. Price £5 plus £1 p&p. All profits to City of London branch funds to acquire a branch banner.

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NXEA 2009 STRIKE BADGE commemorating solidarity of ASLEF members. Purchase (£3 plus p&p) from NXEA Branch Secretary or District Council 5 Secretary. Contact M Steele on 07788 153954, 1 Rosecroft, South Wootton, Kings Lynn Norfolk PE30 3WX. Proceeds to District Council 5 Education Fund and ASLEF Fighting Fund.



BRIGHTON ASLEF DRIVERS BADGE. Limited Edition of 300. All profits to fund branch reunions. Available for £10 including p&p (cheques made payable to 'ASLEF Brighton Branch No 35') from Mark Johnson, 51 Drove Road, Portslade, Brighton BN41 2PA or phone 07783 847228.

Train of Hope on the rails

FIVE ASLEF members working for Virgin Trains in Manchester Piccadilly are organising an ambitious event which they hope will raise well over £40,000 for the children's cancer charity CLIC Sargent. They are John ('Wasp in a bottle') Young, Gary ('Mr Methodical') Nuthall, Steve ('Closet spotter') Griffin, Jamie ('What's the rush?') Chadwick and Alan ('Mr Contacts') Moss.

They have begun a project to raise money for the charity, and although the main event will not take place until October next year, the planning is already well underway.

'That's how long it will take if we're going to do it properly,' says Alan Moss. 'It needs patience to get it right but we took the view that we're only going to get one shot at it, so everything's got to be organised down to the last detail.'

Called 'Train of Hope', it will consist of three elements.

'The centrepiece of our efforts is going to be a special steam train outing that will run on 1 October next year. We've got train enthusiast Pete Waterman to whistle the train off and a brass band to play on the platform as we board. And we're arranging First Class dining for everyone on board. With luck we'll be able to raise £40,000 from the train alone.'

The other two parts of the project are to hold a number of on-line auctions that will run throughout the year, and they're also organising a raffle. And just to prove how on-the-ball they are, they've already set up a website for the project - www.trainofhope.co.uk.

So how can ASLEF members help? At the



Train enthusiast Pete Waterman will whistle the train off

moment the 'Famous Five' is asking if anyone can donate something that they can auction online, or add to the raffle prize list – or anything else you can come up with!

The team holds regular meetings to go over the planning – including commissioning a painting from John Cowley and all the banking and letter writing – and review how fundraising is going. 'We've all been amazed at the generosity we have seen already. A donation from Stagecoach helped us kick-start the event. Network Rail has granted free track access and we've had gifts from ASLEF, Virgin, the RAF and Best Western. Ian Allan publishing has donated a print and free advertising in its rail magazines. It's brilliant.'

Everything will be 100% open for

scrutiny. Items donated for auction will be advertised on the website and everyone will be able to see how much was raised for their donation, all sponsors will be named and all the accounts will be open to scrutiny at the end of the exercise.

In the coming months the Journal will be keeping members up to date with how the Train of Hope chugs along – but the idea of it failing just doesn't enter Alan's head. 'How can anyone say no to giving to a charity that helps children with cancer and gives their families all the support they can offer?'



WHAT IS CLIC Sargent?

CLIC Sargent was formed in 2005 after a merger between Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood (CLIC) and the Sargent Cancer Care for

Children. Both had a rich history of excellent care and support but they believed that together they could provide more for more children and young people with cancer and their families.

The Sargent Cancer Care for Children was founded in 1968 by Sylvia Darley OBE as a lasting memory to the late Sir Malcolm Sargent

Cancer and Leukaemia in Childhood was founded in 1976 in the South West by Bob Woodward following the death of his young son to cancer

that their child has cancer. Diagnosis often comes as a shock. Treatment usually starts straightaway and can last up to three years.

As the UK's leading cancer charity for children and young people, CLIC Sargent is there with clinical, practical and emotional support, every step of the way.

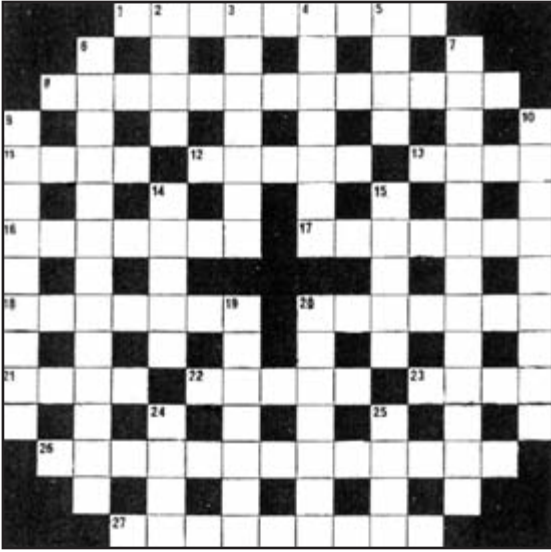
CLIC Sargent offers children and young people with cancer all round clinical, practical and emotional support and social care. From frontline care specialists like nurses and social workers, to providing holidays

and free accommodation for families close to hospitals, the charity has one simple aim: to reduce the impact of childhood cancer.

As over 99% of the charity's income comes from voluntary sources – they couldn't do what they do without their supporters who ensure that the charity can be there for children and young people, and their families, across the UK.

To find out more about CLIC Sargent and why your support is so important visit www.clicsargent.org.uk

Prize Crossword No. 56 set by TLC



CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Platform for the crew (9)
 8 Ornamental greetings (9,4)
 11 Metal (4)
 12 Slow moving mollusc (5)
 13 Large farm building (4)
 16 Free from bacteria (7)
 17 Hand signal (7)
 18 Overseeing local government (7)
 20 Consume too much food (7)
 21 Compass point (4)
 22 ----- and pains (5)
 23 US singer, previously partnered with Sonny (4)

- 26 Workhorse resumes employment after absence (4,2,7)
 27 Replying (9)

CLUES DOWN

- 2 Leave out (4)
 3 Tragic ship (7)
 4 At the front (7)
 5 Short nail (4)
 6 Pancake Day (6,7)
 7 Accumulated riches (8,5)
 9 Money man (9)
 10 Forefathers (9)
 14 Adhere (5)
 15 Jane -----, TV personality and cook (5)
 19 Capital of Uttar

- Pradesh, India (7)
 20 Outdoor event (4-3)
 24 Largest organ of the body (4)
 25 'Soon' informally (4)



MARKS & SPENCER

The winner of this month's crossword will receive Marks & Spencer vouchers to the value of £25

Solution to Crossword No 55 which appeared in the November edition of the ASLEF Journal.

Congratulations to **Colin Tarrant** from **Burnley**

ACROSS 1 Tenant 5 Top Speed 9 Cup of Tea 10 Anoint
 11 Hand Down 12 Unveil 13 Up to Form 15 Eden 17 Sect
 19 At the Top 20 Inmate 21 Unearned 22 Eunuch
 23 Hurt Look 24 Redheads 25 Wiring **DOWN** 2 Educated
 3 A Good run 4 Tit for Tat 5 Train of thoughts 6 Synonym
 7 Evidence 8 Duty List 14 Rotten Row 15 Engineer
 16 Examined 17 Sparkler 18 Cape Horn 19 Attache

Name.....
 Address.....

Postcode.....

Thanks for all your responses to the 55th ASLEF crossword in the November edition. If you complete this month's crossword please send the solution to the Editor, ASLEF Journal, 9 Arkwright Road, London NW3 6AB by the 14th of the issue month.

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FREE LEGAL ADVICE ASLEF also provides first class free legal advice – both for members and for their dependents. During 2009 ASLEF recovered £1,946,190.45 in damages for all types of cases. Call the helpline on 0808 100 8009

EMERGENCIES If you are an ASLEF member who is arrested or being interviewed by the police and need legal assistance – day or night – you can call the members' Emergency Hotline on 0800 587 7530.

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